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ABSTRACT

The values and desired lifestyles of college freshmen from the classes of 1980 through 1985 are examined, based on University of Michigan survey results. The following goals were rated by the freshmen: a good marriage and family life, strong friendships, finding purpose and meaning in life, finding steady work, achieving work success, making a contribution to society, having lots of money, and being a community leader. Specific job characteristics, national problems, views on governance and institutions, and recommended actions for social change were also evaluated. Findings include the following: about 77 percent ranked a good marriage and family life as their primary life goal; about 68 percent valued strong friendship; finding purpose and meaning in life was ranked third, finding steady work was ranked fourth, and being successful in work was ranked fifth; about 23 percent considered making a contribution to society to be extremely important; only 1 in 6 in the class of 1983 considered it extremely important to have lots of money, while only 1 in 10 rated being a community leader as extremely important. (SW)

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Lifestyles & Values of College Students: Classes of 1980 through 1985

by

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Lifestyles & Values of College Students: Classes of 1980 through 1985**

OVERVIEW

As college freshmen, what did the 1983 graduating class members value? How do their views compare with the freshman-views of prospective 1984 and 1985 graduates? Did their views, as freshmen, differ from those of the 1980 through 1982 graduates?

As the following discussion reveals:

> "Compared to their predecessors in the late 1960s, today's students are quiter, less conspicuous in dress and behavior, and less given to excesses in their political views and actions. No question about it, young people these days are less flamboyant than those of a decade earlier. But to be more accurate about it, we should say that the flamboyant minority of a decade ago does not have much of a counterpart today."

Should these college graduates of the last three years, and prospective graduates of the following two years, be characterized as 'conventional, 'conservative', 'traditional' ? It would appear not, for although a number of their values might be so identified, they have other values and views which would not be so identified. For example, they express a considerable tolerance for alternative life styles; e.g., cohabitation outside of marriage. Many use marijuana despite its legality. Their views regarding racial issues and sexual equality appear more flexibile and liberal than those expressed by their elders.

Over the past several years, a series of surveys by the Institute of Social Research, The University of Michigan, gathered detailed information from high school seniors. The samples were broad representative cross-sections of young women and young men throughout the United States. Sample populations ranged in size from approximately 15 to 20 thousand seniors from about 20,000 school districts throughout the country. Survey questions related to social and political participation, attitudes about appropriate roles for men and women, attitudes about different races, views on energy; environment; drug use, and

**Data, and discussion quotes, are drawn from Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper No. 4 authored by Jerald G. Bachman & Lloyd D. Johnston: "Fewer Rebels, Fewer Causes; A Profile of Today's College Freshmen" Institute of Social Research, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. 1979.

personal plans.

Overall, the results of these surveys between 1976 and 1981 clearly evidenced:

> "That no single label - conservative or liberal, conventional or radical, turned off or turned on - is likely to fit today's freshmen. They are reaching adulthood during a period of great complexity in social issues, and great awareness of that complexity. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find a similar complexity in their views about many of these issues."

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
LIFE GOALS

What have been the personal plans and aspirations of these six 'generations' of college freshmen? Have they differed much from year to year? One of the surveu questions presented a list of life goals and asked: "How important is each of the following to you in your life?" (not important; somewhat important; quite important; extremely important). Table 1 summarizes their responses:

Table 1: "Extremely Important" Life-goals: As Freshmen

Valued Goals	1980-82	Graduates of		
	Average	1983	1984	1985
1. A good marriage and family life	75%	79%	76%	77%
2. Strong friendships	66	69	69	66
3. Finding purpose & meaning in life	68	66	65	65
4. Finding steady work	62	65	63	66
5. Being successful in my work	59	63	59	62
6. Making a contribution to society	24	23	24	23
7. Having lots of money	14	16	16	18
8. Being a leader in my community	9	10	10	9
Total percentage	377	391	382	386

Scanning Table 1, one word characterizes these responses - consistency! It is noted that over this six year period:

1- The maximum percentage shift for any of these "extremely important" life-goals was only 4%.

2- With only 2 exceptions, identical rank-orderings are noted for this 48 matrix distribution: (i.e., 8 items evaluated each of 6 years).

3- With only 3 exceptions, greater or equal percentages of the 1983-85

graduates selected these life goals as being "extremely important", vis-a-vis the averages for the 1980-82 classes.

4- The range of variation of the total percentages, annually, was merely 15%. Expressing this as a proportion of the average,annual, Total percentage, it was a miniscule 4%. As noted - sustained consistency of responses, throughout, is most evident.

It is further noted that these young adults consistently top-rank 'healthy' interpersonal relations: "a good marriage and subsequent family life" are highly valued. On the average, a solid three-quarters (77%) top-scale this life-goal. Other ..."studies of adults of all ages suggest that these are wise priorities, since satisfaction with marriage and family have rather consistently proven to be central determinants of overall life satisfactions."

Following closely, an average of 68% value "Strong friendship". A solid two-thirds consistently high-rank this dimension of personal relationships. This again suggests that these young women and men more frequently consider people-relations to be "extremely important" rather than things.

Next in rank, and virtually equalling frequency of selection, is evidence that the folk wisdom of "man does not live by bread alone" is strongly endorsed by these college freshmen. "Another central factor in life satisfaction is work. Nearly two-thirds ... (of the 1983 graduates) rate it extremely important to find steady work, and be successful in that line of work. But in spite of their stress on job success, only one in six considers it extremely important to 'have lots of money' ". Yes - the Protestant work ethic appears to be alive-and-well among these young Americans!

"As an indicator of idealism or altruism, 23 percent consider it extremely important in life that they'make a contribution to society' ". It is further noted that annually 23 or 24 percent of these freshman respondents very consistently selected "extremely important" for their description of this life-goal throughout

this six-year period (classes of 1980-85, inclusive).

"While these percentages are lower than ... (virtually all) on the list, it should be remembered that this broadly stated goal may appear rather distant and unattainable to many individuals. The same may be true of 'being a leader in my community', which only one in ten (among the class of 1983) rates as extremely important."

And finally - over a six-year period a majority of these very substantial numbers of college freshmen assign "extremely important" to the life-goals of good marriage; family life; work. Therefore, a more detailed examination of their plans and aspirations in these areas appears timely.

Marriage and Parenting:

As freshmen, the class of 1983 reported:

1- They expect to marry and have children: (about 4 out of 5 so indicate).

2- Most consider the ideal time for marriage to be sometime after completing college.

3-The majority consider it "very likely" they will stay married to the same person for life. "Most of the rest think it "fairly likely" that they will. (Perhaps those in the latter group are more realistic, given recent statistics on divorce rates)."

4- Almost half report they have thought only a little about having children. "Young women (are) twice as likely to have thought a lot about whether to have children and how many they would prefer. The most popular number of children is two, but nearly half of those expressing a preference would choose three or more children. (Only four percent prefer none)."

5- There is a greater preference among these young women to have a ... "longer interval after marriage before having their first child. This probably reflects their greater concern with the impact that children bearing will have on their careers. Although the great majority of women planning to complete college

want children, only about four percent expect to be full-time homemakers at age 30." (underlining supplied)

6- The fact that over 90% reject the full-time role of homemaker strongly suggests the ..."massive impact of the women's movement. Given their interests in both children and careers, the problem for these women will be to find an appropriate balance between the sometimes conflicting demands of their family and their work."

7- The most preferred arrangement in married life ..."for a couple with no children" involved wife working full-time or part-time. When one or more preschool children are added "two-thirds find this arrangement unacceptable". The most acceptable arrangement under these circumstances was expressed as the wife being a full-time homemaker.

8- "Although young women in this freshman class certainly do have long-term career aspirations, they are not massively abandoning the 'traditional' pattern of the wife managing the home full-time while her children are small. It seems clear... "that these young adults, both male and female ... are strongly committed to the principle of giving time and attention to their children."

9- It is of further interest to note that another area in which traditional views prevail concerns the possibility of the husband working less than full-time. Such an arrangement is still viewed as unacceptable by most of this generation. "This means, of course, that the male sex role is much more narrowly circumscribed than the female one, at least when it come to majority views about any lifestyle involving less than fulltime work."

In summary then - regarding marriage and parenthood, these college freshmen in their plans and expressed preferences do not differ radically from past freshmen. In large measure they:

(1) prefer marriage
(2) want children
(3) appear willing to accomodate to the needs of these children.

However, important shifts are also evident in this dimension of behavior; the changes continuing, albeit slowly, during the latter part of the seventies:

(4) wives working full-time, particularly when there are no pre-school children, is widely accepted
(5) majority are fairly tolerant toward "a man and woman living together without being married"
(6) only a minority tolerate " a man and woman who decide to have and raise a child out of wedlock".

In concert - these responses suggest "a willingness to let people 'do their own thing' so long as others - such as children - are not adversely affected."

Work and Workplace:

Consistent with the "extreme importance" the class of 1983, as freshmen, assigned to work as a life-goal, more than four out of five answered the following question affirmatively: "If you were to get enough money to live comfortably as you'd like for the rest of your life, would you want to work?" (It is noted that a higher proportion so responded than did those adults in the work force queried by R.P.Quinn & G.L.Staines as reported by them in The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey; Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute for Social Research, 1979).

Additionally, three-fourths agreed with the statement, "I expect work to be a very central part in my life." And wholly consistently, only about 15% agreed with the statement, "to me, work is nothing more than making a living". As previously noted - in the collective views of this generation the work ethic is far from dead!

In this connection, however, Dr. Allan Fromme, psychologist, offers some thought-provoking observations:

> "The fact is, work is good for us. It demands activity, concentration, effort. It creates contest and drama, and keeps us in a constant relationship with people. Once we quit, it's gone. We have to vreate it.
>
> So much for the plusses of work. On the minus side are the sheer quantity of work and the subtle changes it makes in our personalities. Without realizing it, we overdo it. It's part of the work ethic of our society. We've been misled to believe that work is not only good for us but ennobling, so that the harder we work, the more righteous we feel. Even the pressures, irritations, and disappointments add to our sense of self-righteousness."
> ("50-plus" magazine, March 1982; p.47)

It is also noted that this youth work ethic has limits. Half indicated they would like a type of work they could forget after the workday is over. The great importance they place on family life and other interpersonal relationships explains in large measure "their desire to place limits on their commitment to work.

Job Assessments:

Several questions they responded to concerned those things they rated "Very Important" in jobs. Table 2 summarizes their responses.

Table 2:- Job Dimensions Rated as "Very Important"

Job Characteristics	Graduates of			
	1980-82	1983	1984	1985
1. Interesting to do	90%	93%	90%	91%
2. Uses skills and abilities	74	74	74	74
3. See results of what you do	60	61	58	61
4. Predictable, secure future	60	63	63	63
5. Good chances for advancement	58	64	63	64
6. Chance to make friends	55	57	54	55
7. Worthwhile to society	48	48	48	47
8. Chance to earn good deal of money	42	47	48	51
9. Job most people respect, look up to	35	37	38	38
10. High status; prestige	21	26	25	26
TOTAL percentage =	543	570	559	570

Scanning Table 2, consistency of responses is again clearly evident:

1- The average percentage range for these "Very Important job dimensions was only 4%.

2- Identifal rank-ordering is noted for the 24 maxtric distribution covering the years 1983-85. With only two very minor exceptions, it is also identical with the 1980-82 averages.

3- With only two exceptions, greater or equal percentages of the 1983-85 graduates selected these job characteristics as "Very Important".

4- The total percentage range was a very small 5%. Expressing this as a proportion of the average Total percentage, it is a very miniscule .9%.

It is further noted that without exception a majority of the respondents each year selected identical job characteristics as being "Very Important". As is evident in both Tables 1 and 2, these young people are very consistent

in their more frequent selection of people-related rather than things-related dimensions of life. Satisfaction of psychological needs is quite clearly of paramount importance to them; the top-three selections in both Tables being so oriented.

Virtually three-quarters, or more, emphasize the importance of interesting job duties and making use of one's abilities and skills. About 60% consistently stress the importance, to them, of seeing the results of their personal efforts; assurances of a secure job future; good chances for advancement.

A majority also find friendships "Very Important", as do close to a majority who opt for job worth to society. The matter of job status and prestige is far less prevalent than the other dimensions considered. Approximately four times as many selected interesting duties as compared to their selection of job status and prestige.

Job preferences are also reflected in selections of various organizational settings as being "desirable". These are noted in the following descending-order preferences tabulation for which the rating scale was: acceptable; somewhat acceptable; not at all acceptable:

1- The non-parentheses percentages are 6-year averages.
2- The percentages in parentheses represent those considering the organizational setting "Not at all acceptable".
3- The numbers in parentheses:the frequency rank-ordering (1 = most frequent; 9 = least frequent) of "not at all acceptable" selections.
4- Some consistency of "acceptable" vis-a-vis "not at all acceptable" responses is noted in that:
   a- the least preference (Military service) also was seselected mostfrequently as non-desirable.

   b-the penultimate selection of "acceptable" (police department) also was the penultimate selection as "not at all acceptable".

   c- excepting "School or university" (only 4%) and "Social service organization" (only 7%), the two most-frequently-selected preferred settings (Self-employed - 44%; Small group of partners - 22%) were least-frequently-selected (9%) as non-desirable.

Rank-order ("acceptable")	Rank-order ("not acceptable)
1- Self-employed - 44% (9%)	(6.5)
2- Small group of partners - 22% (9%)	(6.5)
3- School or university - 21% (4%)	(9)
4.5- Large corporation - 20% (14%)	(4.5)
4.5- Small business - 20% (16%)	(3)
6- Social service organization - 19% (7%)	(8)
7- Government agency - 18% (14%)	(4.5)
8- Police department - 9% (29%)	(2)
9- Military service - 7% (42%)	(1)

Clearly, "the most preferred work settings are those which provide the greatest independence and involve the least external control." Standing alone, by far, is "Self-employed". It evidences more than six times the frequency of selection for the least preferred; military service.

It is further noted that with the exception of the most frequently selected (44%), all others reflect selections by less than 1 out of each 4 respondents. Evidently a variety of work environments appeal to these respondents; none more than in moderate degrees.

And finally - the fewest numbers objecting to various organizational settings were those who selected school or university; social service organization; self-employed; small group of partners.

Money & Materialism:

Responses to several questions revealed a "strong consumer orientation during the high school years, and suggest that this pattern is likely to continue." A majority have indicated that they "very much enjoy shopping for things like clothes, records, sporting goods, and books"

A majority are committed to the 'American dream'. "They want to own their own home (not an apartment or condominium) with a big yard, well-kept lawns, appliances, stereo, and the like. Having a car is ...important to three out of four. ...About half think it ...important to have 'clothes in the latest style' ".

Given the current economic situation, are the aspiration for material things expressed by these young men and women unrealistic? Perhaps. "Up to this point in their lives, today's youth have enjoyed much more purchasing power

than their parents did at a similar age, so it is perhaps understandable that many expect the pattern to continue."

However, "five years from now they will find that necessities such as food and housing will cut down on the proportion - and in many cases the actual number - of dollars available for discretionary spending. But if their material expectations are somewhat unrealistic, their disappointments in future years may be cushioned by attaining goals which they rate more important than 'having lots of money'; marriage, parenthood, friendships,and meaningful work. And, after all, most said they could be content to own no more than their parents."

Therefore - in consideration of their expectations and and expressed preferences regarding marriage, family, work, and material 'creature comforts', these young people view their futures in mostly positive terms. "When asked to think about how their lives will go in the next five years, the overwhelming majority (about 9 out of 10) say they expect theings to get much better or somewhat better. (Most of the rest think things will stay about the same). Only a handful think things will get worse. Apparently any risks or difficulties associated with leaving the home and taking on more responsibilities is outweighed by the prospect of the new challenges, freedom, and privileges they think adulthood will bring."

NATION'S PROBLEMS
ASSESSMENTS

In general, the class of 1983 have 'positive' expectations for their own future. They are, however, "considerably more pessimistic about how things will go for the country and the world over the next five years. Since 1976, each class has been more pessimistic than the one preceding, but the shifts were rather small until (the freshmen of academic 1979-80) when the proportion of pessimists - those who expect things to get worse for the country - jumped by a full twenty percent."

Among this class of 1983, 3 out of 5 (60%) believe things will get worse

for the country during the next five years whereas only 1 out of 5 (20%) thinks things will get better, Regarding their assessment for the rest of the world, it is just about equally glum.

The responses of the classes of 1980-1985, as freshmen, are summarized in Table 3. The question asked was: "Of all the problems facing the nation today, how often do you worry about each of the following?" The percentages noted reference the numbers who responded "worry often". The problems are listed in descending order of frequency indicated by the class of 1983.

Table 3:- Worry Often About These Problems

Worry often about:	Graduates of			
	1980-82*	1983	1984	1985
1. Energy shortage	38%	48%	50%	38%
2. Crime & violence	54	45	39	54
3. Pollution	40	30	25	23
4. Economic problems	29	29	36	36
5. Drug abuse	29	29	28	33
6. Chance of nuclear war	12	20	27	25
7. Race relations	23	19	17	22
8. Hunger & poverty	25	16	18	20
9. Population growth	19	12	8	9
TOTAL percentages	269	248	248	260

Table 3 reveals the following fact:

1- With only three exceptions, less than a majority of these college freshmen indicated that they often worried about these problems.

2- As compared with the elements quantified in Table 1 (Extremely Important" Life-goals) and Table 2 (Very Important Job Dimensions), there is far less consistency of responses over these six years; i.e. an average percentage variation of 10%, with a range of 4% to 17% differences.

3- In consonance with this greater variability, there are no identical rank-orderings within this 48-element matrix.

4- The "TOTAL percentage" variation was 21%; merely 8% of the average annual "TOTAL percentage". This suggests that the overall intensity-level of worry among these six 'generations' of college freshmen remained quite stable.

Although internal variations are noted, the degree or extent of worry shifts but little among the classes of 1980 - 1985, inclusive.

5- If the total percentages reported for each of these nine problem areas are ranked in descending order, problems worrysome to one-third or more of these young men and women have been: Crime & violence; Energy shortage; Pollution; Economic problems.

1 = Crime & violence
2 = Energy shortage
3 = Pollution
4 = Economic problems
5 = Drug abuse
6 = Hunger & poverty
7 = Race relations
8 = Chance of nuclear war
9 = Population growth

Perhaps most distressing is the fact that among these students in 1980 more than a quarter (28%), or approximately 4,750 individuals, reported being threatened by an unarmed person, and some 14% - roughly 2400 - were actually injured by such an individual during the past year. Additionally, about 850 reported being injured with a weapon, and about 2400 reported being threatened, but not injured, with a weapon. Almost 50% reported being victims of theft, (something worth $50 or less) and about 5,700 indicated that something they owned had been deliberately vandalized - utterly appaling!

"Of course, high school students associate mostly with people their own age. Since people that age have just about the highest levels of criminality of any age group, perhaps it should not come as a great surprise that they are often the victims of crimes, or that they worry more about crime and violence than about any other national problem."

These freshmen also express on-going concern regarding the national energy problem. About 80% "report that within their house or apartment an effort is made to reduce heat during the winter to save energy". On the other hand, in the area in which they have the greatest discretion regarding their personal reduction in energy consumption - the use of automobiles - more than 40% of those with driver's licences indicated that they had made "not very much effort, or none at all", to cut back on their driving.

They also expressed "considerable concern over the deterioration of the environment and the use of scarce resources." A solid 60% rejected the claim that "America needs growth to survive, and that is going to require some increase in pollution. (They) strongly support banning products which risk harm to the environment, and they favor 'pollution taxes' to encourage less environmentally damaging ways of producing products."

In regard to race relations, "about one in five" ...state that they often worry about race relations in this country." Most, however, express optimism "about the way things are going". Three-quarters say that relations between blacks and whites have been better, and both blacks and whites gave just about the same responses. A large majority indicated that their personal experiences with people of other races had been very good or mostly good.

More importantly, overwhelming proportions of high school seniors in the late 1970s indicated that "having people of other races included among their friends, supervisors, co-workers, neighbors and children's friends ..."would be acceptable and, in many cases, desirable." Only an annual average of about 10% expressed reservations about such contacts. If their answers reflect their honest attitudes it "bodes well for the future of race relations in this country."

Abuse of drugs concerns many of these young women and young men. While illicit drug use is more common in recent past years, "the majority of today's youth still hold quite conservative views on the subject." About three-fourths do not approve of "someone even experimenting with the more serious illicit drugs, (i.e., drugs other than marijuana), and most strongly disapprove such experimentation. The majority believe that users of all such drugs run a substantial risk of harming themselves and/or others."

The one exception to this pattern of conservatism is use of marijuana. Occasional use receives the acceptance of the majority, and experimentation the acceptance of nearly all. However, regular marijuana use still is seen

as unwise and is viewed with disapproval by two-thirds of all seniors."

Are today's students much different from "college students in the late sixties; the spectre of anti-war protests and demonstrations? ... Anti- military sentiment ...probably hit its peak around 1970 and started to decline soon thereafter. Since 1975.... surveys of high school seniors have shown predominently positive views of the military. ....

"About 44% of the college-bound think that the U.S. military is doing a good or very good job for the country. ....

"Preferences that the U.S. should be number one in military power have risen somewhat over the past several years. ....

"For young people finishing high school, the military is more than just an instrument of national policy. ...They see military service as a good place to get an education, advance to more responsible positions, and even have a personally fulfilling job. On the other hand, the military is not perceived as a good place for people to get their ideas heard or get things set right if they are treated unjustly by a superior. In balance, the overwhelming majority ...seem to think that military service is a fine idea and a worthy calling - for someone else."

VIEWS ON GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS

How much confidence do these young people have in the nation; its system of government; its institutions? Apparently many have much confidence. For the class of 1983, "about two-thirds.... agree or mostly agree with the statement, 'despite its many faults, our system of doing things is still the best in the world."

However,as Table 4, below, reveals, these young men and women do not view the world simplistically in terms of the 'good guys' amd 'bad guys'. When asked to rate some of the principal institutions which help to make up the U.S. system, they gave them mixed votes of confidence. All percentages reported in

Table 4 are annual averages for these six 'generations' of college freshmen.

Table 4:- Ratings of U.S. Institutions

Institutions	A	B	C	D
1. Churches; religious organizations	18%*	59%@	44%#	13%¢
2. Colleges/universities	19	82	NA	NA
3. U.S.Military	21	46	27	14
4. U.S. Supreme Court	21	39	37	8
5. Public schools	23	40	NA	NA
6. Courts & justice system	24	27	40	8
7. Police; law enforcem't agencies	32	39	53	10
8. President & Administration	34	32	36	16
9. National news media	36	60	17	36
10. Congress	37	25	34	16
11. Major labor unions	39	32	19	45
12. Large corporations	42	33	8	47

Legend:

A = "To what extent are there problems of dishonesty and immorality in the leadership of ..."
B = "How good or bad a job is being done for the country as a whole by ..."
C = Do you think the following organizations should have more influence, less influence, or about the same amount of influence they have now?
D = "Do you think the following organizations should have more influence, less influence, or about the same amount of influence as they have now?

* = Percent who think that the institution has considerable dishonesty/immorality.
@ = Percent who think that the institution has been doing a good job.
# = Percent who think that the institution should have more influence.
¢ = Percent who think that the institution should have less influence.

Facts to be gleaned from Table 4 include:

1- Colleges/universities are doing a good or very good job for the country; so say an overwheling majority. (Far less enthusiasm is evidenced for public schools.

2- The military have relatively few critics among these young Americans; only one out of five expressing the view that the militar y "has considerable dishonest/immorality."

3- Least dishonesty is attributed to churches and other religious organizations; most to large corporations - about 2½ to 1 ratio.

4- A majority believe that colleges/universities (82%); National news media (60%);

Churches and religious organizations (59%) have been doing a good job.

5- "The President and his administration, and also Congress, get more mixed reviews. They score very low in terms of the job they are doing for the country and a lot of seniors think there are considerable problems of dishonesty and immorality. Still, a fair number think the President and Congress ought to have more influence than they do now - perhaps on the assumption that having more influence would help them do a better job."

6- With few exceptions, less than a majority identified with any one of these six years rating averages. From among 48 such averaged assessments there were but four:

82% = Colleges/university organizations doing a good job.
60% = National news media doing a good job.
59% = Churches/religious organizations doing a good job.
53% = Police/law enforcement agencies should have more influence.

7- As was previously noted, "one of the national problems (these seniors) worried most about is crime and violence, and now we see that the institutions most often nominated for increased influence are the police and law enforcement agencies."

8- If the Table 4 ratings in "A" & "D" are combined, (considering them as 'Negative' assessments); i.e., "dishonesty and immorality in leadership" and "institutions should have less influence" - and "B" & "C" ratings are combined, (considering them as 'Positive' assessments); i.e., "institutions doing a good job" and "institutions should have more influence", a most interesting array results. As Table 5 reveals, with the exception of "Major labor unions" and "Large corporations" ALL OTHERS had a net positive assessment-differential. These young men and women 'voted' negative 496 times, positive 1449 times - virtually three times more 'good guys' than 'bad guys' assessments!

Table 5:- Summary of 'Positive' & 'Negative' Assessments

Institution	Neg.(-)	Pos. (+)	Dif'rnce
1. Churches/religious organizations	33%	113%	+80
2. Colleges/universities	19	82	+63
3. Police/law enforcement agencies	42	92	+50
4. U.S.Supreme Court	29	76	+47
5. U.S.Military	35	73	+38
6. Courts & justice system	32	67	+35
7. President & administration	50	68	+18
8. Public schools	23	40	+17
9. Congress	53	59	+6
10. National news media	72	75	+5
11. Major labor unions	84	51	-33
12. Large corporations	89	41	-48

"In sum, today's seniors seem most alienated from big business and big labor. Though less than thrilled with the performance or integrity of the various branches of government, they would like to see them have greater influence than at present. Their attitudes about universities, churches, and the military as institutions are for the most part favorable. And finally, they would like to see the police and other law enforcement agencies have more influence."

SOCIAL CHANGE STRATEGIES

Having expressed concern regarding various social problems and conditions, these six 'generations' of prospective college freshmen were asked what actions they would approve to bring about social change. Their responses are summarized in Table 6, which follows.

Table 6:- Recommended Actions for Social Change

Action	Percent approving			
	1980-82*	1983	1984	1985
1. Sign petitions	77%	76%	78%	77%
2. Lawful demonstrations	72	73	73	72
3. Boycot products/stores	64	64	67	65
4. Occupy buildings/factories	16	17	17	19
5. Wildcat strikes	12	12	15	17
6. Block traffic	5	4	5	4
7. Personal violence	3	2	3	3
8. Damage things	3	3	5	3

* = Averages for classes of 1980-82, inclusive.

Their collective views reveal:

1- Without exception, identical rank-ordering is evident for all six classes with only very minor variations in percentages annually approving the actions listed.

2- The critical dividing line is clearly legality; i.e., a majority in all instances approved of the various legal actions, with illegal actions receiving but scant approval; an average of but 8%.

On the other hand, when asked how effective the various actions are for bringing about social change, "an appreciable proportion felt that those actions of which they disapprove are nevertheless very effective or at least somewhat effective. For example, only about four percent ....approve of blocking traffic as a protest tactic, but about one-quarter of them think it is effective. Practically none of them approve destruction and violence as tactics, yet nearly one in five think these are likely to be effective."

Regarding the personal behavior of these young Americans in reference to engaging in "various forms of political participation and activism:

1- nearly 94% expect to vote.
2- about half expect to, or have, written to public officials.
3- about one third have, or would, boycott certain products or stores.
4- about one-quarter have, or would, work in a political campaign."

Should then today's college freshmen be characterized as being more conservative than their predecessors?

> "It depends how you define conservative. In terms of public protest and defiance of the system there can be no question that they are less active than college students in the Vietnam war years. In terms of attitudes toward the police, the military, and defense policy generally, they appear to be somewhat more conservative than their recent predecessors. On domestic issues like racial equality and sexual equality they appear to be becoming more liberal. The same holds true for their attitudes about marijuana use (but not other drugs). And their desire for shift of influence away from the private sector (big business and big labor) and toward the public sector will send a chill through most conservatives.
>
> "When we ask the students what political labels they assigned to themselves, the picture does not get much clearer. Over half of the college-bound .... say they have no preference or they haven't decided. (In the mid-sixties, only about one-quarter fell into this category.) Asked to place themselves

on a scale ranging from very conservative at one end, to radical at the opposite end, 21 percent of the college-bound ....still say none of the above, or don't know. For the rest, the most popular point on the scale is moderate, followed by liberal, then conservative. Fewer than three percent fall into either the very conservative or the radical ends of the scale. It seems clear from all this that one single label will not fit all - or even most - of today's youth"; how refreshing!

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1983

Well done is better than well said

---Benjamin Franklin